



## Cultural background Saint Nicholas

### 1. Type of story

This legend tells the life of a saint. It is a mixture of history and fiction. It includes real elements and miracles. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, is often mentioned in the thirteenth century book about the lives of saints, 'The Golden Legend' by J. de Voragine.

### 2. Origin of the story – history – source of the story

The character of Saint Nicholas was inspired by Nicholas of Myra (nowadays Demre), he is also known as Nicholas of Bari. He was born in Patara (nowadays Asian Turkey) between 250 and 270 A.D.<sup>1</sup>. He died on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 343 in Myra (Asia Minor)<sup>2</sup>. This is why he is remembered on this date.

The Turks invaded Myra in 1087 and sailors transported Nicholas' body to Bari in Italy. A few years later, a French knight, Aubert de Varangéville, brought part of a finger of the saint to Port, his native town in the north of France. Since then Saint Nicholas was venerated in Saint-Nicolas-de-Port. Later on, because he helped a knight in a battle, he became the patron saint of Lorraine. In the thirteenth century his cult expanded to Germany, the north of France, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands.

According to this biography<sup>3</sup>, Nicholas performed many miracles: he saved sailors from a terrible storm. That's why he is also represented as the patron saint of sailors and seamen, especially in Greece. In the church statuary, he is sometimes represented with a ship. Miracles seem to have accompanied him since before he was born. In his mother's womb he always lay with his feet pointing to the east and his head to the west. While they were baptising him, he stood up without any support for 3 whole hours in honour of St Trinity. As a baby, he would refuse to take milk on Wednesdays and Fridays in order to observe strict fasting.

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<sup>1</sup> Picture 1 - map

<sup>2</sup> Different sources mention different years but always 6th December.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Golden Legend'

He saved three young girls from prostitution. Their father couldn't afford to feed them or to marry them, so he was resigned to letting them become prostitutes. Nicholas threw three purses full of gold down the chimney. The father married his daughters and thanked God for the miracle. This is how his reputation as a gift-giver started. According to tradition, even today Saint Nicholas brings sweets and toys to brave children down the chimney.

He also saved his province from starvation, ordering seamen to unload their cargo of corn, although it was meant for another area. Arriving at their destination, the seamen noticed that the cargo was still intact as at the beginning of their journey.

He saved three soldiers who were on the point of being beheaded by the Roman authorities. In religious iconography he was often pictured with these three soldiers. He is depicted as big and tall and the soldiers are rather small. Some say that this gave birth to the story with the children because the soldiers were mistaken for children.

Saint Nicholas is known as the patron saint of children, especially of good pupils, prisoners, seamen, firemen, florists, bricklayers, lawyers, teachers, girls and boys who are getting married. In the West, Saint Nicholas is a patron of sailors and thieves, because his relics were stolen by sailors from his tomb and transported to Bari, Italy. In the East, he is more remembered for his defence against the Arian heresy.

In ancient Greek the name Nicholas meant 'the victory of the people'. In the Greek folklore he was seen as 'The Lord of the Sea', a more or less modern version of Poseidon.

The best known story nowadays, the one describing the saving of the three children, only appeared in the sixteenth century when the Bollandists, a religious order devoted to writing the lives of saints, wrote his biography. They mentioned Saint Nicholas resurrecting two (not three) children who had been killed by a greedy and mean hotelier wanting to profit from their money and who put their bodies in his salt tub.

A link can also be established with a Scandinavian legend. As the legend goes, the god Odin used to sit on a sledge driven by two tamed wolves. He sent ravens down to the earth with the task of pointing with their beaks at the brave children. At the winter solstice, Odin would go down to earth on his 8 legged horse and reward these children with presents.

Nowadays Saint Nicholas is accompanied by the Bogeyman - *Père Fouettard*. This is someone with a black face and carrying a whip<sup>4</sup>. This tradition dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. According to the legend it all started in 1552 when the French town of Metz was besieged by the armies of Charles V. The people of the town – so says the legend – carried a portrait of Charles V through the streets of the town and burned it. According to this story the Bogeyman would be Charles V. Others say that it is a Moor, hence his colour brought, by the Spaniards. Others even tell that he is in fact the bad butcher, who killed the children and now, as a punishment, has to follow the saint everywhere. It's also likely that he was invented by educationalists at a time when they wanted to make a clear distinction between the good deeds (rewarded by the saint) and the bad habits (punished by the Bogeyman).

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<sup>4</sup> 'Fouettard' is derived from the French verb 'fouetter', which means to whip.

### 3. Do the characters / topics also exist in other countries? Similarities and differences

He is venerated in both the Orthodox and the Catholic Church, from eastern to western Europe. He is the patron saint of Russia, Greece, Amsterdam and Lorraine.

In the north of France (Lorraine, Alsace) Saint Nicholas is celebrated in more or less the same way as in Belgium.<sup>5</sup>

The Dutch, when they went to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, brought with them the custom of Saint Nicholas. Sinterklaas became Santa Claus and the children's festival was celebrated on the birth date of Jesus, on the 25<sup>th</sup> December. It started the modern tradition of Santa Claus or Father Christmas, as he is called in Europe.

Saint Nicholas' best-known partner, the Bogeyman<sup>6</sup>, also exists in different countries and cultures. In Belgium and France, he is usually black with a whip and is called '*Père Fouettard*'. He used to remind the pupils of their bad deeds and to threaten them, although this frightening appearance is disappearing nowadays. In Germany and Austria, he is called '*Knecht Ruprecht*'. In some German speaking areas he is disguised as an animal, often a billy goat, named 'Krampus' or 'Pelzbock – Rasselbock – Pelznickel – Pelzruppert or Bartel'. In the Czech Republic the Bogeyman symbolizes evil (horns, long red tongue, whip, chains) and is accompanied by his counterpart, a white angel with a golden star symbolizing good. In Poland on the other hand the saint is often accompanied by an angel.

### 4. Connotations, images, symbolism

The festival of Saint Nicholas is also linked to ancient festivals of abundance and fertility. In the past children mainly received what was available at this time of the year, first nuts, home-made biscuits like gingerbread, later on oranges. Nowadays the choice is so wide that even children no longer know anymore what to ask for.

Some years ago during his visits to schools or to homes Saint Nicholas would tell the children about their good deeds and their bad habits. So, many children were afraid of the saint and especially of the Bogeyman because they knew (thanks to parents or teachers) many things about the children. Nowadays this has often disappeared in many places although the saint still encourages the children to be good and to work hard at school. As such Saint Nicholas is quite different from Father Christmas who has always been the good old man, distributing presents. They also differ in appearance; Saint Nicholas is always represented as a bishop with his long usually red coat, his mitre with a cross, his crosier, white gloves and the bishop ring. Father Christmas wears the same colour red and he also has a long white beard but no religious sign.<sup>7</sup>

The number three often occurs in many religions, myths or stories. In the Christian religion, it's the figure of the Holy Trinity and the Three Wise Men ... The number seven: in the traditional version of the story, the children were called back to life after seven years.

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<sup>5</sup> See further – 6. Customs and traditions connected with the story

<sup>6</sup> Pictures 2 - 7

<sup>7</sup> Pictures 8 – 9

## 5. Values conveyed by the story

One of the values that used to be conveyed by the story (although it's being forgotten nowadays) was that children had to help at home. At the start of the story the three children go gathering ears of corn because they live in a poor family and they have to do their job.

Bread used to be the main food available for poor people. Even bread was not always there, so the mother had to send her children to gather ears of corn left in the fields. It could also be interesting to investigate food and the ways it is made: from ears of corn to bread, from the animal to the meat on the plate (salting being the only way of preserving meat in the past).

Another value involves the love of the mother for her children. She has to send them away in order to survive but when they're lost, she is inconsolable.

The story also tackles a very important feeling in children's lives: fear. They get lost and are afraid. It's important for children to notice that these feelings are not only theirs but are common to many people.

The presents brought by Saint Nicholas were often seen as a reward for good behaviour. For a long time, Saint Nicholas and the Bogeyman were used to frighten the children. Saint Nicholas knew everything that the children had done in the previous weeks (thanks to parents or teachers) and so he could either congratulate the children on their good deeds or threaten them. Children were afraid of not receiving the hoped for presents and sweets, so they behaved well.

There is some magic in this festival. Until the age of six or seven, children believe that the presents they receive are indeed brought by the Saint. Even later they behave as if they would still believe in him in order to keep the surprise for the youngest in the family, to keep the enchantment alive.

The traditions of Saint Nicholas are well established in some parts of Europe (i.e. mainly in the north of France, Belgium and the Netherlands) and he is considered as part of their heritage. Yet he came from Asia Minor, what is Turkey now. This just proves how interconnected our cultures are.

In this legend, like in many others, Saint Nicholas defends the weak against the strong and helps, protects people who have been unjustly condemned.

## 6. Customs and traditions connected with the story, still alive today

Traditionally, Saint Nicholas is celebrated in **Belgium** on 6<sup>th</sup> December. Already on the days before, children put their shoes in front of the fireplace in order to receive some sweets. On the night of 5<sup>th</sup> December they put a plate on the living room table for the saint to put sweets and toys.<sup>8</sup> They sometimes add a carrot for the saint's donkey and a glass of wine (or beer) for the saint himself. The children wake up very early on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> to discover what the saint has brought them. Nowadays, many families celebrate him on the

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<sup>8</sup> Picture 10

weekend before the 6<sup>th</sup>, so that the children have time to play with the toys he has brought them.

In many nursery and primary schools children receive the visit of Saint Nicholas bringing them sweets.<sup>9</sup> Traditionally he was accompanied by a donkey. Children sing songs they have learnt.<sup>10</sup>

Saint Nicholas also used to visit children at home. He was usually played by a neighbour or a relative. Sometimes you would hear someone knocking on the door and then a hidden hand would throw sweets or nuts. Nowadays you can hire someone to come and visit your house.<sup>11</sup>

The festival of Saint Nicholas has – unfortunately – also become a commercial festival. In many towns and in many supermarkets the saint, followed by the Bogeyman, appears at weekends preceding 6<sup>th</sup> December<sup>12</sup>. There is much advertising<sup>13</sup> for toys and for the visits of the saint, so that the children choose from advertisements what they would like to receive. They also go with their parents to the supermarkets to see the saint. Saint Nicholas sits on a throne and children queue up to greet him and receive a small gift. So Belgian children receive his visit more than once: at school, in shopping malls, in towns, in sports clubs, at home.

Many children still write a letter<sup>14</sup> to the saint, telling him that they are nice children and expressing their wishes as far as toys are concerned. Even if they can't write, they cut out the desired toys from advertisements. They often make their choice from the vast selection of advertisements they see at this time of the year. The Belgian post office answers all these letters<sup>15</sup> (hundreds of thousands of them every year) and the children even receive some presents from the 'saint'.<sup>16</sup>

In the weeks before 6<sup>th</sup> December when you see a red sky, you know that Saint Nicholas is baking his cakes.<sup>17</sup> Typical sweets are 'speculoos', marzipan, chocolate coins, biscuit letters, marshmallows, figures of the Saint in chocolate.<sup>18</sup>

Saint Nicholas is the patron of pupils but also of students in the French-speaking part of Belgium. Many students celebrate him. Already in the weeks before the 6<sup>th</sup> they collect money in order to be able to enjoy the day and have a few drinks. They organise a parade and a big party in the evening. They drink quite a lot of beer to the saint's health.

In **Holland** *Sinterklaas* comes on board, in a ship from Spain with several Bogeymen (Zwarte Pieten). This event is even broadcast on national television. In the three weeks before the 5<sup>th</sup> December, Dutch children – like Belgian ones – put their shoes in front of the fireplace or next to a door. On the next morning they receive some sweets. There was a discussion in

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<sup>9</sup> Pictures 11 -12 – 13 – 14

<sup>10</sup> See 'Activity pack' – Resource

<sup>11</sup> Picture 15

<sup>12</sup> Picture 16

<sup>13</sup> Picture 17

<sup>14</sup> Pictures 18 -19 – 20 – 21

<sup>15</sup> Picture 22 – 23

<sup>16</sup> Picture 24

<sup>17</sup> Picture 25

<sup>18</sup> Pictures 26 – 27 – 28 – 29 – 30 – 31 – 32 – 33 – See also recipes 'Description of activities' – Resource

Holland to see if it was politically correct to have the Bogeymen always represented by black people. But nowadays the Bogeymen do not frighten the children anymore and their costumes<sup>19</sup> are so obviously from the past that they are not associated with black people anymore. Saint Nicholas brings presents to the children on the 5<sup>th</sup> December because on the 6<sup>th</sup> he leaves for Spain. He is often represented flying over the roofs of houses with his white horse and the colourful ‘zwarte pieten’.

Children also sing special songs to celebrate this night. In many families, poems, sometimes ironical, always humorous, are also told. It is much more a family festival rather than a special day for children as it is in Belgium.

The saint often visits primary schools. In many classes children pick up the name of one of their fellow pupils and they offer him a small present and a poem they have written themselves.

Typical sweets received are the first letter of the child’s name made of chocolate, a figurine of Saint Nicolas in coloured foil and coloured marzipan shaped into fruit and animals, pepernoten, speculaas, a long round cake filled with almond paste. Special cakes are even baked for this event.<sup>20</sup>

Although a Protestant country, the Netherlands retain a large and very lively Saint Nicholas tradition.

In **Germany**, Saint Nicholas is celebrated on a small scale. In many areas, on the eve of the 5<sup>th</sup> December, children put their well-cleaned shoes in front of the chimney. In other areas they hang up socks. On the following morning, the children get up very early to see what Saint Nicholas has brought them. He usually brings nuts, oranges, mandarins, apples, gingerbread or speculatus, sometime even small presents. Since Nicholas was a canonized Saint, Martin Luther replaced the festival with a ‘Christkind’ (Christ Child) celebration on Christmas Eve. And so it is the Christ Child or Father Christmas who brings the children the big presents on the 24<sup>th</sup> December.

Originally, the speculatus represented Saint Nicholas (this is still the case in Belgium)<sup>21</sup>. Nowadays they mainly represent Christmas symbols. According to S. Gräfin Schönfeldt this name refers to Spekulator, which means the one who was sunk in spirit. This used to be how Saint Nicholas was referred to in the past.

In **Bulgaria**, Saint Nicholas (Nikulden) is also the patron saint of business people and bankers. All people go to church for a solemn Mass on that day. They organise lotteries and parties.

Part of the traditional rites is to cook fish<sup>22</sup>. Those who are observing Advent are allowed to eat fish on that day. The fish is usually carp. It is prepared and stuffed with a filling of chopped walnuts, onions and raisins. Special ring-shaped cakes are made and baked for that day. They are decorated with the image of Saint Nicholas and his ship. Before dinner

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<sup>19</sup> See picture 34

<sup>20</sup> See pictures 35 - 42

<sup>21</sup> See pictures 43

<sup>22</sup> See picture 44

begins, the oldest member of the family has to taste the food. All Bulgarian people called Nick, Nikolaj, Nikola, Nikoletta, etc. celebrate their name day on the 6<sup>th</sup> December. When you have a name day in Bulgaria anybody who knows, loves and respects you can come to your house and be your guest without your invitation or without prior warning. If you have your name day, you should be prepared to treat your guests.

In **Poland**, Saint Nicolas (Sw. Mikolaj) is celebrated in some regions, e.g. Upper Silesia (around Katowice) because some traditions there were influenced by German customs. He often comes in the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup> December. He brings small gifts, mostly sweets and fruit (apples, oranges, nuts). He knocks at the door, enters the house, asks some questions and wants the children to tell him a story or to sing him a song. Sometimes, if he has too much work to do, he comes during the night from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>. In that case he leaves the gifts either in the shoes or under the pillow. Saint Nicolas comes and visits the children until they are 16 or 18. He is accompanied by an angel helper and he travels on foot or in a sleigh pulled by a white horse as he visits homes in the countryside.

In **Hungary**, children carefully clean their boot and put it on the windowsill on the eve of the 5<sup>th</sup> December. Saint Nicholas (Szent Mikulás) has two helpers, a good angel who distributes the presents and a bad Krampus. Good children receive sweets and small presents on the 6<sup>th</sup>. But bad children find potatoes, stones or a wooden spoon in their boot. Most children receive some of each, as they are neither all good nor all bad.

The Saint also visits schools and day care centres, where the children sing songs or say poems in his honour. The Saint then calls each child by his name and has a personal message for him.

In **England**, although Saint Nicholas is not celebrated in the same way as on the continent, there are some leftovers of past traditions. There are more or less 500 Anglican churches named after him and they mark the 6<sup>th</sup> December with a special Patronal Feast. Some parishes and cathedrals (among others Canterbury, York or Hereford) have taken over the old tradition of the boy bishop, i.e. a young boy (sometimes nowadays a girl) dressed as a bishop, addressing the people and leading the prayers in the church service in honour of Saint Nicholas.<sup>23</sup>

In the **Czech Republic**, angels lower Saint Nicholas (Svatý Mikuláš) with a basket, full of nuts, apples and candies, from the sky, from heaven. He is accompanied by an angel and by the devil. The devils parade in the streets, rattling chains, whereas Saint Nicholas and the angels with paper wings visit children at home. The Saint questions children about their behaviour. Like in Hungary, good children receive stockings filled with oranges, nuts, chocolates and small presents; bad children receive old potatoes or coal.

In **Greece**, especially in the islands, where Saint Nicholas (Nikolaos) is mainly celebrated as the patron saint of sailors and seamen, small boats go out with decorations of blue and white lights.

In **Romania**, (Sfântul Nicolae) not only do children receive gifts, but also adults. Presents are given to everybody, friends and those in need included.

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<sup>23</sup> See picture 45

In **Serbia**, (Sveti Nikola) each family has a patron saint. Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of many families; some say more than half of them. On this day people gather at the house of the oldest family member. They sing and pray together. Friends are not officially invited but are always welcome. People traditionally eat fish.

In **Luxemburg**, Saint Nicholas is called '*Kleeschen*'. He is always accompanied by the Bogeyman, called '*Housecker*'. Together they visit schools and the Bogeyman has got small whips to smack bad and wicked children. But nowadays children don't have anything to fear any more. It's the teachers that the Bogeyman teases, while the children laugh. Saint Nicholas also visits most towns on the Sunday before the 6<sup>th</sup> December, where he is welcomed by the mayor and a crowd of children. Like in Belgium children put a plate on the table on the night before the 6<sup>th</sup> and they receive sweets and toys.

In some places in **Switzerland** (mainly German speaking cantons), Saint Nicholas still visits the children at home. He is accompanied by the '*Schmutzli*'<sup>24</sup> (the dirty one). The parents give him a list with the names, the age of their children and also a list of things they did well and their bad habits. Saint Nicholas then distributes the presents prepared by the parents and encourages the children to be better next year.

In other places (e.g. in Zurich or Küssnacht am Rigi) there is a night parade. Many people go through the streets with bells or wearing masks. Children also make their own mitres and parade with them in the streets<sup>25</sup>.

## 7. Links with the landscape

There are many churches dedicated to the cult of Saint Nicholas. Some towns are called after him:

-In Sint-Niklaas, in Flanders (Belgium), there is a '*Huis van de Sint*' where you can see all this attributes and the big books where he used to write down everything about good and bad children.<sup>26</sup>

- Sankt Niklaus in Switzerland<sup>27</sup>
- Saint Nicolas in the French speaking part of Belgium
- Sankt Nikolaus im Burgenland in Austria
- Liptovský Mikuláš in Slovakia
- San Nicolás de Tolentino in the province of Las Palmas in Spain
- Szigetszentmiklő in Hungary
- and many others<sup>28</sup>.

## 8. Different versions of the story

The traditional version is the one told here. But of course, many writers and storytellers have written their own modern version of the story, involving new characters, changing some details and stressing other values.

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<sup>24</sup> Picture 46

<sup>25</sup> Picture 47

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.sint-niklaas.be/modules/myalbum/viewcat.php?cid=11>

<sup>27</sup> Pictures 48 – 49

<sup>28</sup> Pictures 50-52



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[www.lyoba.ch/st-nicolas](http://www.lyoba.ch/st-nicolas) (postcards collection of Saint Nicholas)

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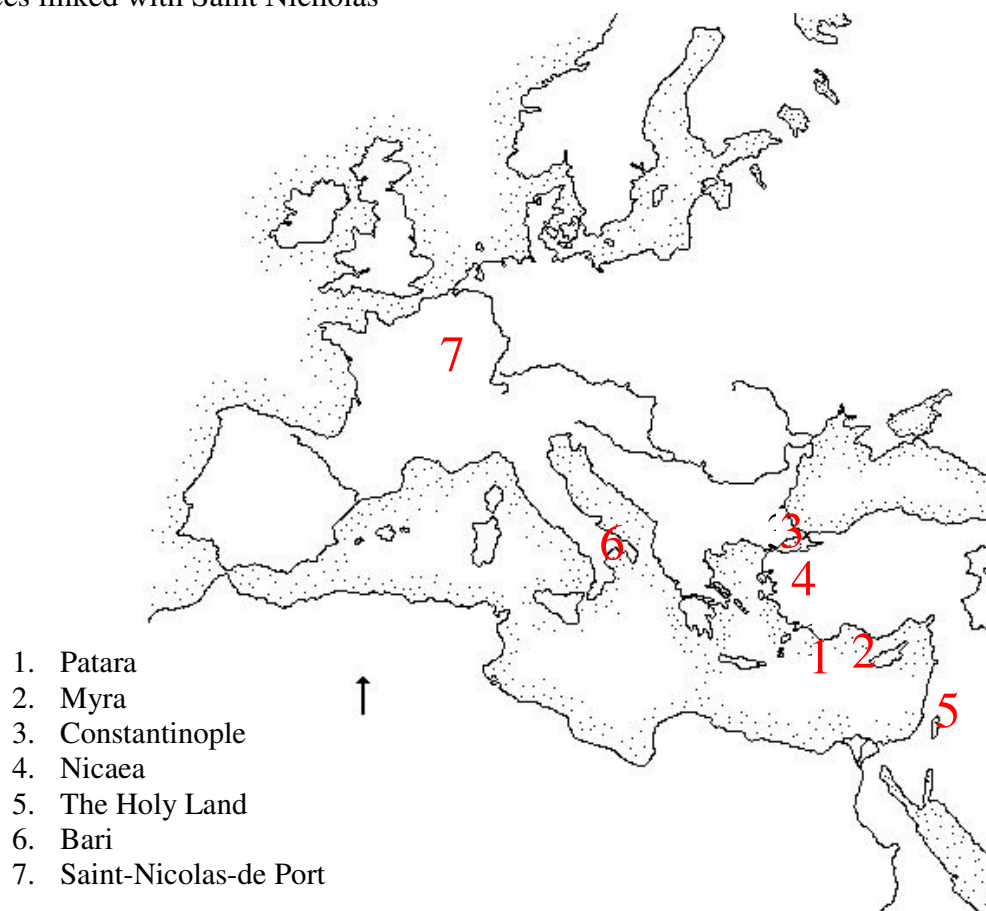
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Picture 1

Map of the Mediterranean Sea

## Places linked with Saint Nicholas



Picture 2



Saint Nicholas and the 'Père Fouettard'

[www.remersdael.be](http://www.remersdael.be)

Picture 3



Zwarte Pieten – [www.sinterklaasutrecht.nl](http://www.sinterklaasutrecht.nl)

Pictures 4 – 5



Krampus

[www.luehmann.at](http://www.luehmann.at)  
[www.tourismuspresse.at](http://www.tourismuspresse.at)

Picture 6



Saint Nicholas – Knecht Ruprecht  
[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

Picture 7



Saint Nicolas and the angel (Poland)  
[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

Pictures 8 – 9  
 Saint Nicholas and Father Christmas / Santa Claus



Picture 10





Pictures 11 – 12 – 13 – 14  
Saint Nicholas – School ‘Les Magnolias’ Bruxelles



Picture 15 – Advertising for Saint Nicholas’ visit at home



Picture 16 – Advertising for Saint Nicholas’ visit in the town of Namur



Illustration 17 – One example of advertising for toys distributed among the households (catalogue – 106 pages)



**Family Toys**  
 GROUPE JOUETS BROZE  
 fournisseur de bonheurs...

**MIJOU**  
 Rue St Jean, 10 Jodoigne Tél. 010 81 24 79  
 Ch. de Louvain n32 Eghezée Tél. 081 87 92 57

**JODOIGNE :**  
 Saint-Nicolas présent Samedi 4/11/2006 de 14 à 17  
**EGHEZÉE :**  
 Saint-Nicolas présent Dimanche 5/11/2006 de 10 à 12

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Pictures 18 – 19 – 20 – 21 - Examples of letters to Saint Nicholas

Cher saint Nicolas  
 Pourrais-tu m'apporter : un multiball set, des legos  
 star-wars numéros 4479, 8619...  
 un laboratoire de chimie, un tir pigeon,  
 Est-ce que tu vas bien?  
 Merci  
 Arthur Gilles  
 Ottignies, 1340 Rue du taver  
 nier n°20





cher saint Nicolas,

Nous sommes 3 petites filles sages:

Elodie (6ans), Lucie (3ans) et

Veronique (1 1/2an).

nous serions très contentes si-

vous nous apportiez ce que nous

châtons



un jeu UNO



N'oubliez pas Caroline, Vincent,

Florence et Florent

P.S. Ravié, venez samedi chez nous, merci! Valérie

## Illustration 22

CHÈRE MAMAN, CHER PAPA,

DEMANDEZ À VOTRE ENFANT DE M'ÉCRIRE QUELQUES MOTS OU DE ME FAIRE SON PLUS BEAU DESSIN. REMETTEZ ENSUITE LA CARTE AU COMPTOIR DU POINT POSTE SANS L'AFFRANCHIR AVANT LE 5 DÉCEMBRE 2004. N'OUBLIEZ PAS DE MENTIONNER LE NOM, PRÉNOM ET L'ADRESSE DE VOTRE ENFANT ET TRÈS TRÈS BIENTÔT, JE LUI ENVERRAI UNE RÉPONSE AVEC UNE SURPRISE.



Grand Saint-Nicolas  
7, rue du septième ciel  
Le ciel

*E.R.: Dirk Boeren, Centre Normal, 1000 Bruxelles.*

A compléter:  
Mon nom: .....  
Mon prénom: .....  
Mon adresse rue: ..... n°: ..... boîte: .....  
Code postal: .....  
Commune: .....

 Point Poste

Attention! Ne pas poster la carte dans la boîte aux lettres. Ceci est une action du Point Poste.





Illustrations 22 – 23 : Answers from the Belgian poste office



Illustration 24 – Book delivered by the Belgian poste office



Illustration 25 – Saint Nicholas ‘is baking his cakes’



Illustrations 26 – 27 – at the baker’s



Illustration 28 – typical Saint Nicholas plate





Illustrations 29 – 30 – chocolate coins, marshmallows (guimauves)



Illustrations 31 – 32 – ‘bacon’ (lards), ‘nic-nac’



Illustrations 33 – 34 – figure of Saint Nicholas in chocolate, marzipan



Illustrations 35 – 36 – Biscuits



Illustrations 37 – 38 – chocolate letters and ‘peppernoten’



Illustrations 39 – 40 – 41 – ‘Spéculoos’

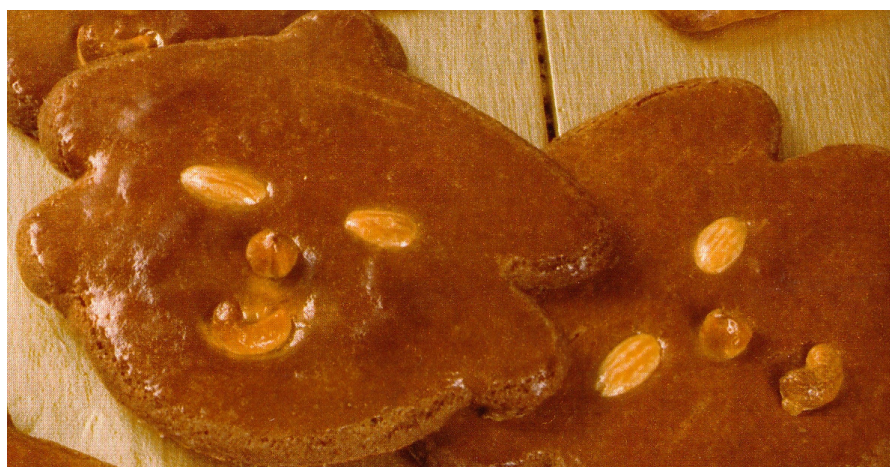






Illustration 42 – Saint Nicholas cake



Illustration 43 – Belgian and German ‘Spéculoos’



Illustration 44 – typical Bulgarian dishes



[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

Illustration 45 – The boy bishop, England (Hereford)



[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

Illustration 46 – Switzerland : ‘Schmutzli’ (the dirty one)



[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)



Illustration 47 – Switzerland – children with their mitres



Illustrations 48 – 49 Sankt Niklaus in Switzerland, statue at Mrs. Birner's



Illustrations 50 – 51 – Saint Nicholas in Majorca and in Barcelona



Illustration 52 – Saint Nicholas in Croatia

